



T/V *Athos I* Delaware River Oil Spill

Responding to oil and hazardous substance releases, NOAA is a one-stop shop for protecting, assessing, and restoring the nation's natural resources.

On November 26, 2004, the *Athos I*, a 750-foot tanker, hit an object in the Delaware River near Philadelphia, spilling 265,000 gallons of crude oil. At the spill site, NOAA is—

- Providing scientific support to the U.S. Coast Guard
- Assessing and restoring injured natural resources
- Conducting navigation surveys (which helped identify the object causing the collision)
- Providing weather and oceanographic data
- Providing scientific support for reopening the Salem Nuclear Power Plant

Providing cleanup support

NOAA has scientists based in each Coast Guard district to provide scientific support for spills. At the T/V *Athos I*, NOAA is providing hazard and shoreline assessments, information on oil behavior and movement, cleanup recommendations, risk communication, and public outreach. Submerged oil caused the closure of the Salem Nuclear Power Plant, the second largest in the U.S. NOAA is providing field survey and modeling tools for reopening the facility.

Assessing injured resources

NOAA is also a federal natural resource trustee, acting on the public's behalf to protect and restore coastal and marine resources injured by oil and hazardous substance releases. NOAA biologists, toxicologists, and economists are collecting data and conducting studies to determine the full impact to natural resources and services. NOAA is working cooperatively with cotrustees (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and the responsible party, Tsakos Shipping. To date, NOAA and cotrustees have identified the following potential impacts—

Shoreline. Roughly 214 miles of shoreline have been oiled to varying degrees.

Fish. Bottom-dwelling fish are at most risk from submerged oil, including shellfish, juvenile fish and larvae, and the federally endangered short-nose sturgeon.

Birds/wildlife. Most oiled, dead birds are unaccounted for at spills. To date, ~178 birds were collected and died during rehabilitation, 366 birds were rehabilitated and released alive, and 17 oiled birds are pending release. Other affected wildlife may include muskrat and bald eagles.

Recreational uses. Fishing, shellfishing, boating, and hunting may have been impacted.

Restoring natural resources

Once the full range of injuries is identified and quantified, NOAA and partners will develop a plan describing the injured resources and services and the types of restoration projects to address them. Typically, citizens and environmental groups help NOAA, cotrustees, and the responsible party identify, select, and implement on-the-ground restoration.

NOAA in the region

The *Athos I* is one example of NOAA's work in the region. The map below shows NOAA efforts to repair harm from oil and hazardous substance releases at other sites.



For more information, contact—
Jennifer LaBarre
202.482.4630
Jennifer.LaBarre@noaa.gov

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